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SUBJECT: Kabila reaffirms commitment to Amani Process
at September 14 Goma meeting with ambassadors

¶1. (SBU) Summary: President Kabila came for an infrequent visit to Goma September 13 following CNDP's unilateral declaration of withdrawal and summoned P-5 ambassadors for a tour d'horizon September 14. Kabila was clear in his support for the Amani process which, it was announced at the meeting, has been extended for one year. He regretted recent anti-MONUC actions by the populace and stated that MONUC had his complete support. He said he wanted immediate action on disengagement and put the burden of getting CNDP on board entirely with the international facilitation. He said disengagement lines should be placed where forces were now located (implying that FARDC would not withdraw from positions FARDC occupies in the Rutshuru buffer zone). He said he wanted to continue to build military pressure on FDLR, but combating CNDP was the priority. Earlier, EU Special Envoy van de Geer had a testy call from Nkunda, who said he was not interested in participation in talks with the FARDC or government, and would "think about" a face-to-face meeting with van de Geer. Nkunda asked for an inquiry into FDLR atrocities at Ngungu, where MONUC plans an operation to drive out PARECO/FDLR on September 15. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) President Kabila arrived in Goma September 13 for the first time in many months, buoyed by MONUC's military actions against CNDP and CNDP's unilateral withdrawal from areas occupied September 5-11. He summoned SRSR Doss, Force Commander Gaye, EU Special Envoy van de Geer, and ambassadors from U.S., Russia, China, and Tanzania (for the AU), as well as EU resident rep for a meeting September 14. France and UK were represented at the level of Charge d'Affaires. (Note: Noticeably absent was a representative from Belgium; a diplomatic contact told us the Congolese invited the P-5, instead of the more usual P-3+2, as a way to exclude the former colonial power. End note.) GDRC attendees included National Assembly President Kamerhe, Minister of Interior Kalume, Minister of Defense Chikez, Advisors Tshibanda and Chissambo, Amani Coordinator Malu Malu, North Kivu Governor Paluku, Chief of Army Staff Kayembe, Advisor Ngweji, Joint Commission Co-Chair Etumba, FARDC eastern forces commander General Lukama, and humanitarian advisor Machako. In typical style, Kabila avoided a bold or clear policy statement, instead turning to his advisors and to Doss and van de Geer for a round-up before making his own comments.

Amani Process extended for one year

¶3. (SBU) Malu Malu spoke first, giving a review of the history of the Amani program. He lamented that it had bogged down but said it had showed promise of life August 26 when CNDP had attended meetings of the Joint Technical Commission. The Commission had agreed to establish ad hoc working groups on disengagement, but the North Kivu group was stillborn with the outbreak of fighting August 28 (for which Malu Malu entirely blamed CNDP), as CNDP had once again boycotted the proceedings. Malu Malu said that the Amani program had been formally renewed for one year by decree signed earlier in the day.

14. (SBU) Etumba gave his own review of Amani, firmly pinning blame on CNDP but noting that the FRF in South Kivu had come on board and that the South Kivu working group had made progress. Machako gave a disjointed presentation on the humanitarian consequences of the recent fighting, claiming there were 150,000 new or re-displaced IDP's (OCHA puts the figure at 90-100,000).

15. (SBU) SRSG Doss said that every crisis could present an opportunity: the present outbreak, with MONUC's response, could provide the opportunity for progress on disengagement. He urged all sides to return their forces to previous positions (i.e., to include FARDC), and he urged greater flexibility and imagination on the part of FARDC (i.e., in particular, Etumba). He said that Nairobi was as important as Goma and it was essential that the government not relent in putting increasing pressure on FDLR. He urged pursuit of an energized DDR program for non-contact armed groups.

EU Special Envoy met September 13 with CNDP

16. (SBU) Van de Geer focused his remarks on the CNDP, noting that the special envoys had not had a face-to-face meeting with Nkunda in two months. He said the facilitation team had met a middle-grade CNDP team (note: for four and a half hours) the previous day at Kimoka. There, he said, he had made three proposals: (1) CNDP to engage in direct military-to-military talks with FARDC to begin September 14 (note: Van de Geer told CNDP that General Lukama said he would be willing to go to Kimoka); (2) CNDP to go back to meetings of the ad hoc working groups and Joint Commission, as early as September 15; and (3) Nkunda to meet van de Geer and the facilitation team within the next three days. The CNDP team in

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response, he said, had been lukewarm on the first, negative on the second, and noncommittal on the third. Van de Geer conveyed the demands made by the CNDP team: release of 68 claimed new prisoners arrested in Goma since August 28 plus action on the list of prisoners previously presented to the government; return of FARDC to previous positions (to include not only new positions occupied in the Rutshuru corridor, but the return of several FARDC brigades and battalions to areas where they had been before being called forward against CNDP in the recent fighting); MONUC to secure and protect areas from which CNDP was now in the process of withdrawing (to prevent exactions by FARDC, FDLR, Mai Mai); and de-linking of FARDC and FDLR. (Van de Geer did not reveal the first demand the CNDP team had made -- rejection of the Amani program and a call for a new structure "conformable with the Acte d'Engagement.")

17. (SBU) Chikez, in a short but sharp statement, criticized the international facilitation for not being clearer and more effective with the CNDP and for disrespecting the sovereignty of the state by calling for FARDC withdrawal. Noncommittal, Kabila turned to van de Geer to respond to Chikez. Van de Geer said that, in fact, the special envoys had been very tough with Nkunda - so tough that they had lost direct contact with him. In the meeting with CNDP at a lower level the previous day at Kimoka, the envoys had been very clear and direct.

Kabila reaffirms commitment to Amani

18. (SBU) At last Kabila spoke. He said that there was no other way forward but the Amani program. He was dedicated to Amani and inflexible on the point. The population of the Kivus was demanding results from it. The first step, he said, was disengagement of armed forces. It was essential to get down to the real work of disengagement right away, not in two weeks or two months, but tomorrow. Kabila said that disengagement should be in the positions where the armed forces were now located (Note: this formulation would suggest an unwillingness to reciprocate CNDP's withdrawal to previous positions. End note.)

19. (SBU) Kabila said he had tried everything with Nkunda, even the "Numbi affair" (mixage), but nothing had worked. Nkunda was a criminal. Nkunda, Bosco, and Makenga were a band of "little criminals." However, Kabila said, the CNDP was the partner in the

peace process and there was no alternative to dealing with it. It was essential to get immediately to work on disengagement, otherwise Nkunda would gather strength and seek an occasion to attack again in a few weeks or months and the process would again be back to square one. Disengagement was only the beginning of a much larger process involving integration into FARDC or demobilization/reintegration. (Note: Kabila indicated that demobilization could take place in North Kivu, an apparent concession. End note).

Kabila urges continued contact with Nkunda

¶10. (SBU) Kabila said that the international community must keep trying to contact Nkunda or - if he were dead or sick or pushed aside - with whoever was in charge in the CNDP. He was worried about the lack of contact with Nkunda. It was up to the international facilitation to get Nkunda on board. (Note: Kabila evinced no responsibility to contact Nkunda. End note.)

¶11. (SBU) Kabila regretted the recent difficulties MONUC had encountered with the local populace (blocking movement, stoning convoys). He said that MONUC had his complete support and that the government had not manipulated the populace against MONUC. However, he admitted that there were "extremists in some areas" (unspecified) who were capable of stirring up the populace. The best way to handle the populace was for the government and MONUC to work closely together to make Amani work and reestablish the authority of the state.

We will go against FDLR when "Nkunda Affair" resolved

¶12. (SBU) Kabila said that he was committed to the Nairobi process and would continue to increase pressure on the FDLR. However, coping with the military offensive by the CNDP in recent days had become the highest priority. Kabila said it was unreasonable to ask DRC to launch operations against FDLR when Nkunda was attacking the main roads leading to Goma. Once the "Nkunda affair" was resolved, DRC could turn its whole attention to FDLR.

¶13. (SBU) The meeting concluded with remarks by SRSR Doss underlining that MONUC could not be effective without the

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government's full support. He agreed that the first priority was disengagement and it needed to be quick, but there were complex details to work out. To this end, he was staying over in Goma to work with Force Commander General Gaye and MONUC military to elaborate a disengagement proposal to cover all conflict areas with the CNDP.

Van der Geer reports on call from Nkunda

¶14. (SBU) In a follow-up discussion among the facilitation team, van de Geer said that he had received a call from Nkunda earlier in the day. Nkunda, he said, was nervous and aggressive. Nkunda told him, "You are not being helpful" (not clear if "you" meant van de Geer personally or the whole facilitation effort). He said he was not interested in talks with the government. He repeated some of the threatening language of the September 11 declaration (if one shot is fired, we put a "decisive end to any future threat"; this was the second withdrawal under pressure and it would be the last one, etc.). Van de Geer told him that such telephonic contact was a poor form of communication and they needed to sit face to face. Nkunda said he would think about it and call back the next day. He had one specific request, for an inquiry into what he called FDLR atrocities in Ngungu. (Note: North Kivu brigade reports 16,000 IDP's have gathered around the South African helicopter base near Ngungu, fleeing from what the brigade calls PARECO's occupation and looting of Ngungu, in the southwestern-most reach of CNDP terrain, where MONUC had previously established one of three small mutually-agreed buffer zones.). SRSR Doss revealed to the facilitation team that the North Kivu brigade would launch an attack on PARECO/FDLR tomorrow, September 15, at Ngungu to reestablish previous lines.

Facilitation meets to discuss

¶15. (SBU) The facilitation team received a late SMS message from CNDP official Kambasu Ngeve September 14: "The Political Direction of CNDP asserts that the government must first show a gesture of good will before any meeting occurs."

¶16. (SBU) Among the facilitation team, with Doss, General Gaye, and van de Geer present, there was consensus that there might be little progress with Nkunda or CNDP for the being, even if there were a concession by FARDC on withdrawing from positions taken in late August in the Rutshuru buffer zone. The facilitation team disagreed whether pressure could or should be put on the government to make such a concession, in the light of the horrendous overreaching by CNDP, with resultant massive humanitarian consequences (not to mention discrediting of the CNDP politically and militarily). Gaye argued it would be fruitless for MONUC to propose that FARDC withdraw from Ntamugenga and Mutabo, positions that were militarily untenable but which had become politically sacred. Doss countermanded him. He said he would instruct MONUC to outline a disengagement proposal based on sensible positions on the ground, which would include FARDC withdrawal from Ntamugenga and Mutabo and (most acute from a demilitarization point of view) mutual pull-back of both sides from Rugari (where confrontation lines are narrowest, and closest to the Rutshuru highway).

Brief re-cap of events August 29 - September 13

¶17. (SBU) At an earlier briefing for Doss, van de Geer, and the facilitation team, North Kivu brigade commander Brigadier General Rawat summarized the military situation as follows: FARDC provoked CNDP by stealing cattle in the Rutshuru area but CNDP was the first to attack in the early hours of August 28, when it captured FARDC's outpost at Kanombe. FARDC retaliated by taking Mutabo August 28 and Ntamugenga August 29. The CNDP attacks north- and south-ward beginning September 5 ultimately culminated in MONUC's use of force to expel CNDP from Kayala and Kirotshu and CNDP's unilateral withdrawal September 11. In the northern area, CNDP has withdrawn 600 men, carrying rifles, machine guns, and mortars. There were still CNDP soldiers present around Mirangi, apparently not aware of the unilateral ceasefire, and MONUC has given them an additional 24 hours to clear out. In the Kibirizi area, withdrawal of 110 cadres was now taking place, delayed at first because of lack of FARDC cooperation. CNDP (50 cadres with rifles, machine guns, and mortars) finally withdrew from Kanombe, the position captured at the beginning of the fighting August 28, yesterday September 13.

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